

Thus the Alianza para el Progreso -- the task of democratic development -- is the central task of our nations. But no sense of confidence, of optimism in the future of the hemisphere as a whole, conceals our regret at the self-inflicted exile of Cuba from the society of American Republics. Few people in this hemisphere have, throughout their history, demonstrated more courage, greater vitality, an intenser love for freedom, than the people of Cuba. And we greatly miss the help and impetus they might give to our efforts.

The movement of July 26, the Cuban revolution, was noble in concept and stated aim. It proclaimed an end to political tyranny, social corruption, and economic despotism. Its cry of "bread with freedom," its demand for social justice and economic well-being, prophesied the basic hopes of the Alianza para el Progreso.

The people of the United States supported that original revolution. Just as we are proud of our many services to Cuban liberty, we also recognized the mistakes and injustices which have, at times, marred our relationship. And this revolution -- the revolution for which most Cubans fought, and for which many died -- seemed an opportunity to remedy those mistakes and move toward a new era of constructive partnership between our people.

That hope was destroyed.

The stirring goals proclaimed in the Sierra Maestra were betrayed in Havana.

The light of freedom went out on our neighboring island.

The prospect of progress, of a better life for campesinos and workers, was transformed into a grim struggle against poverty and want until one of the richest nations of the Americas now trembles on the edge of economic survival.

The revolution which once stirred the imagination of men throughout the hemisphere today finds only a few small and dwindling bands of followers scattered across the continent.

And the relationship between the government of Cuba and my country now stands at its most distant and hostile point since we opposed the old imperialism of Spain and last fought to liberate Cuba from foreign rule.

It is important to understand this distance, to restate what divides Cuba from my country and from all the American countries: What divides us is the fact that a small band of conspirators has stripped the Cuban people of their freedom and handed over the independence and sovereignty of the Cuban nation to the Soviet nation. They have made Cuba a victim of Soviet imperialism, an instrument of Soviet policy, a weapon in the Soviet effort to subvert the other American Republics.

This, and this alone divides us.

As long as this is true nothing is possible.

Without it everything is possible.

Once this barrier is removed we will be proud to work with Cuba in pursuit of those revolutionary goals which, a few short years ago, stirred the hopes of the Cuban people and the sympathy of the entire hemisphere.

Neither we, nor any other American nation, desire to turn the clock back in Cuba, to return to the tyranny and economic injustice of the past. Our friendly and warm relationship with the revolutionary government of Mexico is witness of our desire to work with those revolutions which dedicate themselves to the welfare of the people.

Rather we believe in a Cuba of free men, free to speak and write and worship, freely shaping their political and economic institutions to meet their national needs as they see those needs.

We believe in a Cuba which has shattered all institutions which perpetuate the privileges of a few at the expense of the many.

We believe in a Cuba where every campesino has the opportunity to own the land he works.

We believe in a Cuba whose association with foreign economic institutions is a partnership shaped by Cuban desires and interests.

We believe in a Cuba whose economy is not dependent upon the will of any other nation, including my own; or on a single crop.

We believe, in short, in the stated principles of the original Cuban revolution.

Nor do we seek the return of foreign ownership of important sectors of the Cuban economy. This clock too cannot be turned back. And the questions of property which remain between us can be negotiated to the satisfaction of both the United States and Cuba once the barrier of Soviet domination and the subversion of other nations has been removed.

There are many in the ranks of the Cuban army and militia, and in the Cuban government itself, who have viewed with sorrow and anger the end of Cuban liberty, the growth of a foreign domination more stifling than any known before, the deterioration in the drive for improved Cuban welfare.

To these men I say the United States is ready to welcome to discussion any Cuban leadership which truly represents the will of the Cuban people to strike down the barrier of Soviet domination and re-enter the community of American Republics.

No Cuban need feel trapped between dependence on broken Soviet promises and the unremitting hostility of the United States. For once Cuban sovereignty has been restored we will extend the hand of friendship and assistance to a Cuba whose political and economic institutions have been shaped by the will of the Cuban people.

I hope that day is not far off.

For our own labors, and the hopes of our sister Republics, will not be complete until the American people and the Cuban people, the American nations and the sovereign nations of Cuba, are reunited in pursuit of the high goals of the Alianza para el Progreso.